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Funding Opportunity: Department of Defense Releases FY 2025 Minerva Research Initiative FOA

Lewis-Burke Associates LLC – October 14, 2024

The Department of Defense (DOD) released a new funding opportunity announcement (FOA) for its signature university-led social science research program, the Minerva Research Initiative (Minerva). The Initiative brings together universities, research institutions, and individual scholars to broaden the understanding of social, cultural, behavioral, and political forces that shape U.S. strategic interests across the world. DOD will utilize this increased understanding to improve its ability to address future challenges and build bridges between the Department and the social science community.

Minerva's topics of interest align closely with and support the Biden Administration's national security priorities, and each proposal should be submitted to only one topic area, even if there is an overlap with another. This year's solicitation includes multiple new and different topic areas, with "Societal Cohesion and Conflict" and "Social Impact of Technological Change" remaining as the only similar topics of interest.

The six topics of interest for fiscal year (FY) 2025 can be found below, with more information and specific topic focus areas found in the full solicitation:

- **Societal Cohesion and Conflict:** This topic "seeks to develop or elaborate upon descriptive models that can be used to assess or predict societal cohesion, as well as analytical models that offer new insights into individual and group formation, particularly in response to crises. Approaches should employ empirical testing and explicitly consider the generalizability of findings across contexts. Particular value will be placed on approaches that can mediate between assessing individual commitment to anticipate the behavior of groups and organizations."

- **Advancing Influence Measurements:** This topic "seeks creative approaches to developing new, more comprehensive system level information-influence measurements. It seeks transformative research ideas that address the limitations discussed above. Submissions are expected to include specific research question(s) the effort would investigate. It is anticipated that projects solely examining media, whether digital, social, and/or analog, or those using only network science methods will not be sufficient to address this topic comprehensively. There is an interest in projects that consider non-US use cases as well as those that compare two or more such cases. There is also interest in projects that consider a multi-level and/or multi-layer perspective and tackle its complexities as part of the proposed research."

- **Artic at the Polar Crossroads:** This topic "seeks research that explores the opportunities and challenges in the Arctic that stem from multiple, simultaneous realities and possible [re-]imagined futures resulting from a changing physical and ecological environment,

increasing access and human activity, introduction and adoption of new technologies, and evolving strategic competition. All research proposed must be human-centered."

- **Cultural Resilience, Climate, and Human Security in Oceania:** Research focused on this topic should address "general studies of the cultures, languages, and social systems of Oceania, updated to consider the current crises affecting communities in Oceania; the role of different groups, especially women, in managing the climate crises in Oceania; and what knowledge, resources, and preparations are needed to prepare migration-seekers and assist migrants in maintaining and sustaining their cultural connections."

- **Social Impact of Technological Change:** This topic "seeks to explore the impact(s) of emerging technologies on social structures and concomitant relationships. Particularly, it is comparatively concerned with how the impact of technological change varies across different societies and across micro-, meso-, and macro-scales. It is assumed that proposals will similarly seek to understand how/if different emerging technologies lead to different categories of social impact(s) and how varied international approaches to emerging technological change may present new opportunities and risks to local, regional, and global orders. Furthermore, proposals should include an appreciation of the moral and ethical implications technological change may present to different societies."

- **Deterrence and Competition Across Military and Civilian Spheres:** Proposals focused on this topic should include "predictive models of deterrence—including third-order effects, decision-points, and trade-offs—and/or escalation management strategies, as well as such models and strategies within a framework of strategic and economic competition. It assumes nuance in how competition and deterrence may be comparatively and cross-culturally understood, and preference will be given to proposals that empirically test such models. We are especially interested in projects that develop and implement innovative causal identification strategies or leverage new measures or data and explicitly address the generalizability of findings and the extent to which similar competition and deterrence logics are applicable across contexts and scales. Multidisciplinary approaches are expected."

The Basic Research Office (BRO), within the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering (OUSD (R&E)), coordinates Minerva and facilitates collaboration with and input from the Army, Navy, and Air Force. DOD will consider both individual awards as well as team proposals. Team proposals must name one Principal Investigator (PI) as the primary point of contact and designate one institution as the administrative lead for working with DOD. Non-profit organizations and commercial entities may be included on a university-led team as sub-awardees only. The relationship between participating institutions and their respective roles, as well as the distribution of funds including sub-awards, if any, must be described in both the proposal text and budget.

Due Dates: Though not required, DOD strongly encourages interested researchers to submit white papers to be evaluated by a research area technical point of contact prior to preparing a full proposal. White papers must be submitted via email to osd.minerva@mail.mil no later than **3:00 PM ET on November 29, 2024**. Proposers are also encouraged to consult with the research area technical point of contact for their topic of interest, whose information can be found in the full

solicitation, before the white paper submission deadline to discuss their ideas. Full proposals must be submitted no later than **3:00 PM ET on February 28, 2025**.

Total Funding and Award Size: DOD intends to fund up to 15 grant awards for up to $1 million per year with a three-to-five-year period of performance. Funding amounts include both indirect and direct costs. The total amount awarded will not exceed $30 million. Cost sharing is not required.

Eligibility and Limitations: Proposals are open to academic institutions, including U.S. universities, DOD institutions of higher education, and foreign universities. DOD encourages submissions from Minority-Serving Institutions but will not specifically designate funds for these entities.

Sources and Additional Information:
- The complete FOA and additional information regarding the FY 2025 topics are available on grants.gov under funding opportunity number "HQ003425NFOEASD01".
- More information on the Minerva Research Initiative, including information on prior awardees, is available at https://minerva.defense.gov/.